DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 418 446 CS 509 813

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TITLE Conceptualizing Public Speaking as Advanced Composition: Contemplating the Implications.
PUB DATE 1997-11-00
NOTE 36p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Communication Association (83rd, Chicago, IL, November 19-23, 1997).
PUB TYPE Opinion Papers (120) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Classroom Techniques; Higher Education; *Instructional Innovation; *Introductory Courses; *Public Speaking; Student Development; Teaching Methods; *Writing (Composition); Writing Instruction; *Writing Processes; Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS *Speech Writing

ABSTRACT

Scholars in the communications field rarely have discussed speech composition, and this conversation is long overdue. Reconceptualizing the basic course as advanced composition can enhance the integrity and reputation of the course. Several noteworthy implications emerge that suggest the desirability of operationalizing such a conception, including: improved instruction; better training and development of instructors (with results extending beyond what they might do in the classroom); and more favorable regard by students, by colleagues in and out of the department, as well as by administrators. The various implications reveal that it would be prudent to align instruction in public speaking with this very valid conception. It can help build a viable, healthy vision of the basic course that will carry scholars onward and upward with a force rarely seen. (Contains 45 references; a sample assignment is appended.) (Author/CR)

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Running head: CONCEPTUALIZING PUBLIC SPEAKING

Conceptualizing Public Speaking as Advanced Composition: Contemplating the Implications

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Presented to the National Communication Association Convention, 1997

November 19-23; Chicago, IL

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Abstract

Reconceptualizing the basic course as advanced composition can enhance the integrity and reputation of the course. Several noteworthy implications emerge that suggest the desirability of operationalizing such a conception, including improved instruction, better training and development of instructors (with results extending beyond what they might do in the classroom), and more favorable regard by students, by colleagues in and out of our department, as well as by administrators. The various implications reveal that we would do well to align ourselves with this very valid conception: it can help us to build a viable, healthy vision of the basic course that will carry us onward and upward with a force rarely seen.

CONCEPTUALIZING PUBLIC SPEAKING AS ADVANCED COMPOSITION: CONTEMPLATING THE IMPLICATIONS

Scholars in our field rarely have discussed speech composition, and this conversation is long overdue. Two decades ago, Michael Leff (1978) noted that our scholarship maintained "strict silence about speech composition" (p. 90) --as did our textbooks. Scholars, according to Leff, issued "grand speculations" but avoided "tangible ground" where they could apply their notions. Richard Katula and Celest Martin (1984) followed Leff's lead, insisting that we must begin "assessing what we do in the area of the composing process" (p. 161). They modeled the activity by applying Frank D'Angelo's conceptual theory of rhetoric to how we might instruct students about "rhetorical invention" (p. 163).

In addition to answering Leff's call to connect scholarship and teaching, Katula and Martin echoed his insistence that we contemplate our "common purpose," our "enterprise" (Leff, p. 90). In doing so they asked us to consider whether assigning a speech was "initiating an activity as cognitively complex as writing an essay?" (p. 161). Katula and Martin answered in the affirmative, noting that "composing a speech text involves complexities, frustrations, blockages, and moments of gestation and exhilaration very similar to those involved in composing an essay" and might even be considered a "more complex process" given that what has been composed may have to be adjusted during the presentation.

Similarly, Stephen Lucas (1990) equated what we do in a basic course in public speaking with the rigor of a class in composition. Lucas observed that "the process of speech composition is not much different--and is certainly no less demanding--than that of composing a written essay" (p. 69). Lucas' matter-of-fact statement seems to assume (as most of us might, perhaps) that when teachers teach speechmaking they, in large measure, instruct students on how to compose a likely effective speech. Lucas' assumption, though, may not always be warranted. Katula and Martin (1984) note that some programs emphasize delivery skills. And even in programs that emphasize composition, some instructors might attend principally to delivery (something I have seen firsthand).

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Although we cannot take for granted that instructors emphasize composition, we would do well to encourage that they do so and perhaps even insist upon it. Obviously, a course devoted in full or in part to public speaking requires writing; one cannot present a good speech unless she or he can write a good speech. Our instruction, then, involves helping our students develop more than effective presentational skills; we also must help them learn how to compose a likely effective speech. And when we teach students to compose effective public discourse what we are doing actually qualifies as advanced composition.

In this paper I explore the implications of conceptualizing our enterprise as teaching an advanced form of composition. To conceive of the basic course as advanced composition has noteworthy implications for instruction, for how we prepare those we would have to teach the basic course, as well as our standing in the academic community. Before exploring the implications, let us examine how our basic course qualifies as advanced composition.

Public Speaking Considered as Advanced Composition

Although descriptions of advanced composition abound, a course in public speaking reflects the principal characteristics that our colleagues in English identify. Katherine Adams and John Adams (1991) note that an advanced composition course exposes students to "a higher level of basics that includes knowledge of invention and revision, style and voice, audience analysis, argumentation, and the rhetoric of various discourse communities" (p. x), and it includes "an appreciation of reading and writing--that can enrich students and encourage them to succeed in many genres" (p. 14). This description mirrors what many of us typically do in a class in public speaking: we explore theories and principles of effective, audience-centered discourse; we give our students experience with writing various types of speeches; and we have them to view and critique the public discourse of others. In addition, as in an advanced composition course, we seek to "expand the students' understanding of the composing process" and we invite them to "explore the relationships among the writer, the reader, the world, and the message" (Penfield, 1991, p. 25).

The similarities continue. Our course can help students develop a heightened appreciation of appropriate form, content, and expression for a particular audience--an orientation advocated by some professors of English. In exploring what constitutes advanced composition, Michael Carter (1991) holds that the "purpose" of the course is to "lead students toward the expertise of specialization" (p. 67). Carter argues that different contexts for writing demand different processes and styles and that it is only feasible during a semester to instruct students, and expect them to acquire expertise, regarding a particular type of discourse for a particular discourse community.

Not all professors share Carter's view. Richard Coe (1991/1996), for example, is uncomfortable with "most university composition courses" because they teach "a rather narrow range," usually having students to write "with intellectual rigor to well-educated audiences, most often specialists" (pp. 209-210). In other words, the range is limited to writing for "academic audiences." Coe advocates that specialists must be able write for the masses, and that in advanced composition we should help our students develop this capability.

In a course in public speaking, we often operate with this orientation, helping students learn to write for the masses. We help them, as Coe (1991/1996) would say, "come to understand the implications of rhetorical contexts by writing for widely divergent purposes, audiences, and occasions (including nonspecialist audiences with no better than average--say, grade 10--reading abilities: the public)" (p. 207). Like Coe and other professors who advocate this orientation, we believe that "students in their last writing course should learn how to help themselves thereafter" (Coe, p. 207); we want our students to "emerge with confidence that they can, in the future, teach themselves any new genre they need to write" (Coe, p. 212). Malcolm Kiniry and Ellen Strenski (1985) emphasize the importance of this approach, noting that "unless given the opportunity to practice various rhetorical strategies in a variety of contexts," our students "are apt to become passive practitioners of formulas rather than active explorers of forms" (p. 191). Taught in this manner, the course "empowers students by helping them grasp principles and develop abilities that allow them to get beyond needing teachers to handle whatever comes next" (Coe, p. 215).

In a course in public speaking, we likely bridge these two positions. Whether we have students to envision an audience of specialists or laypersons, we have them to analyze the rhetorical situation in terms of what seems appropriate and what seems needed by a particular audience on a particular occasion. Our role as a teacher is to help them become more adept at addressing specialists and laypersons alike and ultimately to become their own critic and editor as they produce and present messages. Speech composition (as with advanced composition) is a matter of rhetorical invention, sensitivity, and adaptation, and we hope to equip them for ongoing success as they pursue careers and as they try to make a difference in their communities.

Our course goes beyond the effective construction and presentation of speeches. We also challenge our students to become more adept at processing the messages they receive. Just as we would have them become more critical of the messages they produce, we would have them become more critical of the messages issued by others. The critical processing of messages is one of the most important abilities we can nurture. As Toby Fulwiler (1986) has noted, "the ability to think critically separates the autonomous, independent people, capable of making free choices, from mere passive receivers of information" (p. 25).

This emphasis in our curriculum is consistent with what has been taught for centuries in any society that valued free speech. Only in societies where those in power fear the influence of speech do they limit speaking to messages that they approve beforehand. Societies which value free speech allow and encourage their citizens to think for themselves. They allow a free flow of information and ideas and emphasize the importance of education to promote literacy and to develop the ability to evaluate information, ideas, opinions, and policies. In our lectures and in our textbooks we often review this ideological perspective with our students, noting that the study of speechmaking first arose in early democratic Greece.

This review also affords us an opportunity to discuss how one's ability to <u>compose</u> a message is integral to her or his ability to speak well. We could recall how Cicero (n.d./1988) reported that early teachers of speechmaking emphasized five interdependent elements within the speechmaking process. One was <u>invention</u>, or the ability to gather and devise suitable materials for

a speech. They also emphasized organization, or the ability to decide how materials should be arranged within the structure of a speech. Style likewise was taught and referred to an ability to select effective words and to construct effective phrases. Delivery, considered a central component, meant the ability to use one's voice and other nonverbal systems to convey the message effectively. Early teachers also emphasized memory, the skill of being able to recall one's own material and organization so to present a particular speech effectively. But memory also pertained to remembering what others had said as well as remembering history and specific events. Such memories provided information and a record of ideas and consequences from which a community might derive valua' 'e lessons and insights (see Isocrates, n.d./1992 and Aristotle, n.d./1991).

With this brief review we can note that delivery, although integral to effective speechmaking, constitutes but one of the five canons of rhetoric. The remaining four pertain to a speaker's ability to compose an insightful and potentially effective message. We can also note that although the elements, in their arrangement, seem to suggest that preparing a speech is a linear activity, such is not the case. One does not simply decide what to say and then arrange it and then give it an appropriate style and then present it. Composing a speech is a recursive activity (see Perl, 1980). There is a constant flow between information and ideas as the writer checks one against the other and the words used. The speechwriter will develop and revise the speech as he or she evaluates content and arrangement, detects and repairs weaknesses, recognizes the need for more material, tries out the best phrasing for an idea, assesses the fit with the goals (as well as assess the fitness of the goals), and so on. Preparing the speech, as with any act of composition, involves intense, multidimensional cognitive activity, an area to which we now turn.

The Implications for Instruction

To conceive of our course with a skills orientation suggests that students already know what they want to say and simply need the skills to say it. In comparison, to recognize the centrality of composition in speechmaking is to emphasize the processes of discovery (see Biggs,

1988) and invention and of rethinking and revising. This conception, of course, directs what the instructor will do in the class (see Sprague, 1990): she or he will emphasize speech composition.

As instructors we likely will need to begin by alerting students to this emphasis: they may assume that the course is skills-oriented. To help students realize that competence and effectiveness as a speaker involves more than presentational skills, perhaps we can have them recall when they have encountered a dynamic, outgoing speaker who had "a way with words" and was very poised but strayed aimlessly, leaving them to wonder what point he or she was trying to make. And perhaps they recall a speaker who made unfounded statements, never providing any support for what he or she claimed. If they can recall such examples (or if we can provide one or more on video) then it becomes obvious that, in spite of a polished delivery, the speaker did not present an effective message.

As we underscore the importance of content, we can help students understand that in the process of speechmaking the speaker will spend most of his or her time preparing to speak. The speaker will contemplate and investigate the subject and will construct and refine the message. We will help them see that to write an effective speech requires ample time to form, fortify and fine-tune ideas and the arrangement and expression of those ideas. To assist their own speechwriting, we will need to instruct them about the process, structure assignments so that they will fully engage the process, and coach them as they proceed.

The Writing Process(es): Examining the Literature

In a groundbreaking work, Linda Flower and John Hayes (1981) contributed to our understanding of the writing process by examining it in light of cognitive psychology. Their model identifies "three major processes (plan, translate, and review)" (p. 375) which writers use "over and over again during [the greater process of] composing" and which a writer may use globally, in terms of the whole text, or locally, concentrating on a specific word, phrase, or other unit of thought. Planning refers to contemplating what one might say. Translating refers to attempting to put one's thoughts (as they emerge and take shape) into words. Reviewing refers to evaluating what one has said.

Flower and Hayes explain that these processes "may be viewed as the writer's tool kit" (p. 376). When using the tools, the writer "is not constrained to use them in a fixed order or in stages," and "using any tool may create the need to use another." For example, "generating ideas [i.e., a type of planning] may require evaluation [i.e., review], as may writing sentences [i.e., translation]. And evaluation [i.e., review] may force the writer to think up new ideas [i.e., planning]" (p. 376). The most successful writers evaluate what they have written in light of their overall goals--such as the one(s) contained in a theme or thesis. In this manner, writing is a recursive, not a linear, process.

Although Flower and Hayes assist our understanding of writing via cognitive processes, James Murphy (1982) faults them with dehumanizing the act. According to Murphy, "no human being operates in the Flower-Hayes model. . . instead, 'the writer's long-term memory,' which includes 'stored writing plans,' is at work" (p. 9). Although Murphy may overstate the case (evidence, itself, of a "stored" writing plan, perhaps!), we could use less antiseptic language in describing the operations of one's mind as he or she decides what can and should be said and how to say it most effectively. Perhaps we could use analogies or metaphors, such as "chipping away" or "ironing out the wrinkles" to humanize the processes one undertakes when writing, depicting them in such a way to emphasize a human agent at work.

Rehumanizing our cognitive processes might coax the view that writing is an intimate affair and one that fosters discovery, demands accountability, and so on. But at some point a bit of dehumanization may be desirable: the distancing it provides may well be necessary for one to judge his or her own work and criticize it as a reader would. Perhaps Murphy is correct in terms of invention, but maybe Flower and Hayes' view helps one to enter a revision mode which requires the writer to take on the role of reader/listener so they can get beyond writer-based prose. Perhaps it is best if the writer initially thinks about the audience (for topic selection and sketching out what to say) but not to obsess over the audience during drafting so not to impede inventional flow or discovery. Later, while revising and refining, the writer would need to contemplate her or his audience and read it as they would.

Flower and Hayes' research enhanced our understanding of the process. Current readings in cognitive psychology, along with the research of composition theorists and the testimonies of writers can further inform our understanding of the process(es) and our instruction to our students. In the sub-section that follows I attempt to synthesize the literature from these areas and write as if addressing a student audience.

Putting What We Know into Student-based Prose: An Illustration

As one prepares to speak, she or he integrates material from a variety of sources while discovering what can and should be said. A speech consists of information and ideas, arranged into a coherent form and made more accessible and appealing through good style and appropriate word choice. The mind will operate on all these levels, supplying content which ultimately may or may not make it into the final draft of one's speech. Starting the process early is essential if you expect to construct a quality speech. From the moment you begin contemplating a topic, your mind goes into motion and exhibits a wealth of activity, including sensitivity, exposure, reflection, incorporation, and revision.

Once you have identified your topic, sensitivity will begin to work for you. Sensitivity refers to an awareness of relevant materials in your environment that otherwise might pass unnoticed. Not only will you notice relevant items, but you will notice them more quickly (see Reed, 1992). This phenomenon is akin to that which you experience when you encounter a new word or expression, only to find it subsequently popping up everywhere. Similarly, you will notice information pertaining to your speech suddenly appearing in various places. Cognitive psychologists refer to this phenomenon as priming, explaining that your mind will be attuned to the subject and drawing upon its relevant stores of information heightening your awareness and sensitivity to relevant material present in your environment (see Yaniv & Meyer, 1987). Once you notice what appears to be relevant material, your mind will take in the information and/or ideas, adding the material to existing stores. We can term this activity exposure.

Exposure is a preliminary activity. Your mind also needs time for reflection, that is, time to ponder and evaluate the information, to test ideas, and to begin making sense of all that is derived.

You will associate findings with other information and ideas you have encountered during your investigation, as well as those within your long term memory, and you will begin to assimilate them into existing thought structures or accommodate them into new structures of meaning. Assimilation and accommodation may occur quickly and accurately (Best, 1992), or it may require that you suspend attempts at sense making and return to it later. As cognitive psychologists have noted, when your thinking is "stuck" your mind likely cannot be forced to produce (see Finke, Ward, & Smith, 1992); it probably needs a brief respite. Once you are no longer fixated on the "problem," your mind can operate quietly in the background, making associations and generating new ideas. This quiet time is referred to as incubation (see Best, 1992).

Incubation often yields good results. When you return to the task after a period of incubation, you often will find new ideas flowing from the mind, including a new, improved understanding of the subject and the goals for the speech. You do not have to be on task for these ideas to emerge; they may emerge as flashes of inspired thought while you are cognitively idling. As cognitive psychologists explain: "The classic example of coming up with great ideas while taking a shower may simply reflect the importance of releasing oneself from fixated retrieval processes" (Finke, Ward, & Smith, 1992, p. 166). When these flashes appear, jot them down as soon as possible so as to prevent them from escaping and, also, to free your mind from the burden of trying to retain them and keep them in view. In this manner you will free your mind to continue working creatively.

Quiet time is important for your mind, but you may also benefit from some intensive thinking. You may find it fruitful to push your mind to think. "Freewriting" (Elbow, 1981), often recommended, refers to writing down whatever pops into your head without stopping to analyze or critique the material but to simply keep your ideas flowing onto the page. Later, after the brainstorming session, you will have substance to review and evaluate. Freespeaking (as we might term it), likewise, may assist your discovery. In freespeaking you think aloud as you try to explain something or work through a problem, perhaps in the presence of a friend. You may

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surprise and impress yourself with what rolls off your tongue and the insights it yields. As with other inspirations, you will want to record these as soon as possible.

In addition to time for these inventional processes, you also will need time for incorporation. Incorporation involves sensing if and where specific information and ideas belong in the speech and proceeding to draft the speech accordingly. This is an ongoing process that you would do well to engage as you contemplate the structure and components of your speech and as you search for materials.

As you gather information and explore the ideas and opinions of others, determine what is relevant to your speech and how it is relevant. To do so, shift your attention from the particular information and the idea it suggests to the theme and or purpose of your speech. To facilitate this shifting, you need to take notes methodically.

I advocate the use of note cards with each one limited to a specific bit of information and a particular idea. Record more than information as you take notes: also note the idea the data suggests or supports as well as any ideas for its placement in the speech. In a heading, articulate the gist of the information, particularly with regard to the tentative thesis and main points of your speech. Obviously you have some sense of how the information is valuable in terms of what it suggests or what idea it supports. Force yourself to write it down, even if you believe it will be obvious later. Use a concise phrase to articulate the idea. You might often enter the information prior to writing the idea because you may not have fully determined the meaning and the best wording. Before moving on, though, articulate the idea, even if it is only an approximation. You can revise it later, but you will want to think about the meaning and relevance of all that you encounter.

Think of how inefficient it would be to operate otherwise. Rather than mindlessly taking notes and letting the cards accumulate into a large pile that you will have to sort out and analyze later, begin making sense of your material as you go. Group the cards into categories, noting what related areas emerge. Contemplate the idea in the heading on each card: these ideas that you have penned likely will be a subpoint or a sub-subpoint within your speech, perhaps even a main point.

As you group and arrange the cards, create a rough sketch of your speech. Watch it grow and evolve as you continue to sort through the cards and arrange them and check their fit, one with another and with the thesis statement and purpose. In this manner, the sketch will help you to assemble your notes into the structure of a speech. Eventually, you will have a working outline of your entire speech.

Don't be intimidated by the term "outline." The working outline is merely an early draft/sketch of your speech. It will help you review the structure of your speech to see how well you like it, and you can review the information and ideas you have included and their contribution to, and organization within, the structure of your speech. In this manner, outlining/sketching assists planning and revision.

In addition to taking notes methodically and plugging them into a working outline, also jot down other thoughts/inspirations that emerge. You likely will have ideas for an introduction or for a conclusion, possible sources to consult, the design of a visual aid, what might comprise a good title, what might constitute a good analogy to include in the speech, and so forth. You will want to take advantage of these moments so not to allow any ideas to escape beyond recall.

Once you have begun drafting a working outline, you will have new substance to ponder as you reflect upon what you have penned. Ideas will continue to incubate, allowing your thoughts to mature and enabling your mind to call upon new stores and old stores alike to assess what you have constructed. This process is called <u>revision</u>, and it is essential for quality. Upon reexamination, you will evaluate what you have produced, retaining that which is good, modifying that which needs to be rewritten, and deleting that which is faulty or extraneous. Revision, as composition theorist Jean Wyrick (1996) notes, is not an "autopsy": it does not merely occur after you have a complete first draft of your speech; it occurs any time you reassess what you have done, whether it is a word or a sentence or a title. No set formula exists for when and how often this should occur, but it <u>must</u> occur from time to time throughout the drafting process if you expect to produce a quality message. Revision is part of the ongoing process: the key to good writing is working through multiple drafts.

Teachers have long recognized the importance of revision. Quintilian (n.d./1922), an early teacher of public speaking, emphasized the importance of revision, noting that "correction" includes "addition, excision, and alteration," and observing that "erasure" is "as important a function of the pen as actual writing." A contemporary teacher, Wyrick (1996), observes similarly, noting that "writers who revise effectively not only change words and catch mechanical errors but also typically add, delete, rearrange, and rewrite large chunks of prose. In other words, revision is not cosmetic surgery on a body that may need major resuscitation" (p. 103).

Structuring Assignments to Facilitate the Process

Experience has taught me that we cannot merely assume that once students understand the writing process that they will proceed accordingly. We must structure assignments so to facilitate the process. To use Flower and Hayes' terminology, we would want to ensure that they engage in planning, translating, and reviewing and do so in a recursive manner. Deficiencies may occur with any of these processes both in terms of the time the writer might devote to the task and the timing with which they engage the task. We can address some of these deficiencies proactively in how we structure assignments as well as by providing a bit of mentoring as they proceed with what we have assigned.

We can assist students' development as writers and their performance on an assignment by structuring the assignment in a manner that illuminates and facilitates the process. Providing clear directions for the assignment is vital not only for their performance (see Fulwiler, 1986, p. 28) but also can reinforce what we have attempted to teach them about the process. For example, if asking students to submit a preliminary sketch of a speech, we might provide directions that reinforce a way to plan: "After sketching out the three areas you will address, construct a main point for each area. Refine the wording to reflect your thesis statement, or adjust the thesis statement to reflect what you suggest with the points."

We also can subdivide a larger assignment into stages that will assure that students proceed progressively. For example, we might assign a proposal, a preliminary bibliography with annotated entries, or the submission of a working outline or a working draft. Any of these, alone

or in unison, would require students to get an early start with their planning, investigating, and drafting. A proposal would prompt them to think about what would comprise a viable topic in terms of their interests, what their audience would find worthy, what is feasible in terms of research and the time allotted for the presentation, and what meets the other requirements of the assignment--for example, if it is to be an informative presentation. A preliminary annotated bibliography ensures that they have begun to investigate their topic and are processing what they encounter with an eye toward their purpose for speaking and the areas they will address. And assigning submission of a preliminary draft, of course, would ensure that they will review and revise what they have written, and it also allows us to assist their review by providing comments and sample edits. With this review, they may come to know the indispensability of extensive revision.

Individualized feedback can spark students' growth, and for the best results, Fulwiler (1986) suggests, "have a short conference with each writer" (p. 27)--a suggestion worth taking. I often have scheduled individual conferences, and always with good results. In these instances, feedback becomes interactive: together we edit a draft (or portions of a draft) and in doing so we engage the processes (i.e., planning, translating, and reviewing) and experience how the processes are recursive. During the conference (as well as in written feedback on their submissions) we can emphasize that "good" writers look to their "higher-level goals [to] give direction and coherence" (see Flower & Hayes, p. 379). We can stress the importance of crafting a tentative thesis and main points and using them to guide one's composing. We, of course, would want to emphasize that these are, at best, tentative and may require adjustment in response to what is discovered during the process of investigating and composing. Here they can benefit from sample editing we provide (as well as a discussion of our choices) as we tighten structure, coherence, and expression.

As we work with them, we can help them see that writers must develop patience so that they can pin pen down their thoughts. Perhaps Fulwiler (1986) observed this best, noting, "It's not important that writer's know exactly where they are going when they start; it's important they trust the process of composing to take them somewhere" (p. 22). This lesson is one of the greatest

they can learn. Fulwiler testifies: "I can predict that writing for a certain period of time will usually create meaning. It is this trust, especially, that we need to teach our students" (p. 23). And we can tell them as well of the work ethic, perseverance, and time that is required. We can tell them of the frustration that will arise periodically as well as the occasional joy. And we can share with them our own drafts to illustrate the sloppy, messy nature of the affair. And then we can pull out the good stuff: the end product that, after a period of gestation and multiple drafts, has captured something and reads so well.

In the individual conference, students seem to learn a lot about writing and they seem to appreciate the personal attention. The affective learning can be substantial; their attitudes toward writing often change. Chances are they will become more confident in their own ability and more excited about what they can produce and how it can have an impact. They may enter frustrated and unsure, and we can help them see the possibilities and envision the results. We have seen it for ourselves, after all, and we can look them in the eye, smile, and say "trust me." Then, as we look over their drafts together, we can help them to glimpse the craft as we tackle whatever looms in need of attention. And this degree of intimacy and display of patience and modeling of the enterprise can be some of the best educational moments they have ever experienced. Twenty minutes of one-on-one can make a difference for a lifetime.

Arranging such meetings (one for every student) is not as great a feat as it may seem. To do so, I utilize some of the time we already are contracted to meet--class time. Doing so guarantees that those who have an impossible schedule can, in fact, meet with me. And dedicating a class period or two to the enterprise conveys the value I place on the activity. For those who can meet outside of class, I either schedule to meet with them during regular office hours or during a few additional hours that will work well. During the class time that we appropriate for meetings, they are to devote that time to working on their speech. In this manner, the days we do not meet as a class is not perceived as "release time," but as dedicated time. And they know I expect even better results since we have assigned extra time to the process.

In addition to individual conferences, in-class discussion, too, may display the reality about writing as students exchange stories about their frustrations and their successes. Their stories, as Brown (1990) observed in the organizational context, might engender identification and can also provide direction: They likely will identify with one another's stories and, with this sharing, learn more about the act of writing--especially if the instructor is careful to provide a sense of closure about what has surfaced. In this manner we may help them to see that they are not lesser beings if they do not achieve excellence in a first draft--or even a second draft; perhaps we can help to instill the faith Fulwiler describes and underscore the importance of an early start.

We must also develop their faith in their ability to make an impact. Part of our directives will be for them not to write solely for the instructor but to write for the classroom community. We can emphasize that when they present a speech they are not to adopt a "report mode" but a "community mode." As Fulwiler (1986) observes, "writing to people who care about us--or what we have to say--engages us as writers more than writing to people who read our work in order to grade us" (p. 25). In the public speaking class, we must nurture a sense of community and have them to select a topic and draft a speech with their classmates in mind. We might use Kenneth Burke's (1941 1973) notion of "equipment for living" to capture their imagination and direct them toward a sense of mission--a sense of purposeful communication. And a sense of mission is integral to a sense of accomplishment; success for the public speaker is seeing that they can awaken, influence, and motivate others.

Coaching Student Writers

Even when students understand the process of writing, they still can benefit from our guidance. They need us to pinpoint areas they need to rethink and revise or refine, and they need us to model how they might proceed. Fulwiler (1986) provides research-based tips for how to provide better critiques for students, including the importance of administering to their psychological needs. Fulwiler advises: "Respond positively and personally where possible. . . . Writers begin to care about their writing when they see that we care about it. Caring is the necessary first step to actually writing better. . . . It's difficult to work on a piece--revising and

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editing--when nothing encouraging has been said about it" (p. 29). Fulwiler's recommendation can be especially expedient in a course in public speaking, mirroring Kathleen Ellis' (1995) findings that personal attention with "high immediacy behaviors" may "enhance the likelihood of positive student outcome[s]" (p.76).

Fulwiler also emphasizes the importance of not overwhelming students with too much feedback. He encourages professors to "single out one or two conceptual or organizational problems for comment, suggesting that other problems will be dealt with on subsequent drafts. This way the student has a clearer idea of what to do next; it may also surprise you both how many smaller problems will be cleared up in that initial act of revision" (p. 30). In addition, he advises, "Point out exactly what you object to, but without necessarily correcting it yourself: that way the writer has something concrete to go on when he or she turns attention to revision" (p. 30).

Fulwiler also notes the importance of modeling and its most helpful purpose, advocating that we "edit a page or two, not the whole paper. . . . Show the student what constructions or stylistic problems bother you on the first page or two and how to fix these, then ask the student to edit by example the rest of his or her work. This saves all of us time and places the editing responsibility where it rightfully belongs" (p. 30).

Fulwiler's recommendations complement educational psychologists' findings that affirm how important it is for us to help our students to experience success. Wilbert McKeachie (1994) observes that "seeing the teacher or other students [successfully] perform a task will encourage students who see themselves as similar to be to the successful students, but it will not help students who see themselves as so different that another's success bears no relationship to their own chances of success" (p. 352). For students who "lack a sense of efficacy" we must "provide situations where success occurs" and also give them "opportunities to undertake challenging tasks on their own to prove to themselves that they can achieve" (p. 352). In this manner, we can help students succeed, learn from their success, and enjoy subsequent successes. And once they have experienced success, maybe they will sense the power and then be hooked on the feeling, not settling for less in future endeavors.

To assist students' success as writers and their ability to meet the challenges, we have to help them learn that, as Coe (1996) observes, "the means for dealing with virtually any writing problem should include a decision about when during the writing process the writer will pay attention to that problem" (p. 209). For example, the writer must understand when not to interrupt her or his flow. We might tell them that while they are drafting to not worry about spelling or the absolute best word choices; simply keep rolling along--writing it however it comes out. They can review what they have written later. And if they are unsure about something they are reviewing, perhaps they should not discard it but merely set it aside. As Quintilian (n.d./1922) cautioned, writers must review their work critically but also avoid being too hasty. Before deleting what they have composed, for example, they might draft another version of the same idea. Later, they can decide which one to delete, or they might merge the two versions.

We must also help students learn that good writing requires extensive rewriting. As Kiniry and Strenski (1985) contend, at "key junctures" students should be directed to revise--and preferably rethink--what they have written" (p. 191). Even though revision isn't "autopsy" (as noted above), we might initially engender students' appreciation of it through mortuary practices. On the day students are to hand in a paper, for example, we could assign a surprise rewrite--having them to resubmit (a week later) a revised version. We might have them to attach the earlier "final" draft, marked with the changes they made. We could remind them to use the evaluation form or grading criteria that we will use (if we provide it up front) to guide their work and to reinforce our instruction. In these revisions, students already comfortable with their drafts might only revise expression in a few places while those less comfortable might rethink organization, reasoning, evidence, or whatever else seems deficient. On the day we spring this surprise, we might also pair them up for a structured critique of each other's speech, using the criteria that we will use as we grade it. Students can learn a lot about writing while engaged in this type of activity (see Book, 1985).

When we require students to rewrite a submission we would do well to heed what Jody Nyquist and Donald Wulff (1990) have observed. Our goal, they remind us, will be to have the

student to "value revision as a way to enhance thinking rather than as a required rewriting, which is often viewed as a punishment for an inferior product" (p. 339). Perhaps we can take our cues from Wyrick (1996), who tells her students: "Rarely, if ever, does anyone--even our most admired professional writers--produce the results they want without revising. . . . Revising is not a tacked on stage nor is it merely a quick touch-up; it's an integral part of the entire writing process itself. It's an ongoing opportunity to discover, remember, reshape, and refine your ideas" (p. 103). As noted above, individual conferences, modeling, and displaying our own various drafts and artifacts might help students achieve this understanding.

In this manner and by utilizing these tactics, we can coach our undergraduates and assist their development as writers. Our undergraduates are not the only ones who will benefit from this engagement. We must do the same for our graduate students, as well as help them become coaches themselves--an area we now will take up.

The Implications for the Training and Development of Instructors

To conceive of the course as advanced composition can improve how we prepare our next generations. When graduate students enter our programs they arrive displaying various abilities with writing and various degrees of understanding writing as a process and its place in our curriculum. It benefits graduate students, their students, and our discipline to ensure that they develop a heightened appreciation and understanding of writing and its centrality to our basic courses. To develop this appreciation, we must acquaint them with the processes involved in writing so to help them to develop excellence in their own writing as well as their ability to teach the students in their sections how to compose a quality speech.

Writing and the Instruction of Writing in the Basic Course

An ability to write well and an understanding of writing is basic for teaching and is especially vital for an instructor of public speaking. As Richard Larson (1969/1996) observes, teachers need to develop an understanding, appreciation, and keen proficiency with writing because they regularly employ writing as a part of instruction. If we think but a moment about what we do, Larson's observation holds true. For example, we devise syllabi, construct exam items, generate

written assignment descriptions, and provide written feedback on submissions and written critiques of oral performance. We must write these well so our students can understand and appreciate our various instructions, the objectives we have stated on our syllabus, and the comments we offer in response to their work. And the critique we provide of their speechmaking, to be most instructive, must address compositional factors as well as presentational factors.

Our instructors must appreciate (as I have emphasized earlier in this paper) that effective speechmaking requires quality composition. Instructors will have to assist students with their writing and to do so they must understand the processes involved. To develop or bolster this understanding, a review of the process (akin to that offered above) seems well-advised. Some graduate students may have only had an introductory class in composition, and some may not have even had a course in public speaking. We cannot expect them to teach something they do not understand or with which they are unfamiliar. If they lack exposure and experience, the unfamiliarity may add to their teaching anxiety, and it may contribute to a reluctance to emphasize composition, coaxing them toward an emphasis on delivery. And even if the graduate student can write well it does not mean that he or she can teach others about writing; they may not understand the basis of their own success. A review of the process can illuminate why they are (or are not) successful and how they might help others to succeed. In addition to the review, we might have them experience the process(es) themselves, and we might provide pointers for and practice with critiques.

As we review the process, we might note that instructors of public speaking often tell students that they will need time for "research." We must help the instructors to understand--as well as clarify for their students--that research and writing (as described above) are complementary and, ideally, are done simultaneously. Mandating an early start on a speech, in other words, is necessary for more than a few trips to the library; it also ensures that the speaker will allow ideas to form and take better shape as he or she investigates the topic and begins to structure and flesh out the speech. TAs must develop this understanding as we prepare them for their teaching roles, so to

appreciate writing as discovery, the processes involved in the overall process of writing, and the recursive nature of the activity.

Recently, one of my graduate students offered insights into how we might proceed in nurturing this understanding. As she and I discussed the writing process, she--a young woman from Taiwan--pulled out an electronic dictionary, typed a few strokes and said: "To me what you are describing is this." The display read "pilgrimage." She watched my eyes light up. "Jenny" Chang, had hit upon the perfect metaphor to explain the process. "Pilgrimage" can serve as an "advanced organizer, . . . an orienting structure . . . to guide the learning process" (see Darling, 1990, p. 269). "Pilgrimage," for example, can frame a discussion of how writing is an act of discovery: One has to embark upon a journey--not knowing the exact destination (i.e., they do not already have the content merely awaiting expression); they must trust the process to take them "there." The going is not always easy; it requires dedication, solitude (see Booth, 1988 and Schroeder, 1997), effort, introspection, optimism, and perseverance.

Pilgrimage underscores the necessity of these qualities as well as the importance of allowing ample time to proceed. Writing requires time, not just so ideas can incubate and the like, but so one also can deal with obstructions or distractions along the way. While attempting to draft this paper, for example, I moved across country and undertook my first tenure-track position. The demands of selling one home and trying to locate and settle into another, while tackling a new job, obtaining a new driver's license and new vehicle registration and tags, and so on, and so on, posed some interference. More than this, though, I lost a good friend in an automobile accident. Countless times I have imagined the blow out, the flipping and rolling, and the immense impact of the head-on collision and Tiffany lying there, conscious yet dazed, as strangers tried to free her from the wreckage and place her badly broken body on a board. I can imagine her sobs and her longing for someone dear to hold her and comfort her. Two weeks later, I lost another good friend and a longtime companion, my grandmother. Locked into my mind is the look in Grandmother's eyes as she fixed her gaze on me for the last 45 minutes of her struggle. I watch the calming, I see the change in color, I watch her yawn and hear those last breaths, and I feel her thin body relax as I

cradle her in my arms. It was a sweet ending, really, in contrast to that which I imagine for my friend Tiffany. These images filled my head as I filled the U-haul and headed from Texas A&M to the University of Akron. And they continue to replay as I attempt to concentrate and compose. Writers cannot detach themselves completely but must contend with various experiences and memories that preoccupy the mind. In the midst of a pilgrimage there may very well be distractions and setbacks along the way. But the writer has to persevere; perseverance is what the pilgrimage requires.

Writing as pilgrimage also can assist an understanding of producing reader-based prose and at what point in the process one should attend to writing for the reader. Once the journey has been made and the writer has found something with which he or she feels fulfilled, the writer must retrace the steps and share what has been gained. To share effectively, the writer must address his or her audience in a manner that is meaningful and understandable. In this manner, the writer bears witness to others and seeks to inspire them as he or she has been inspired--to share with them what he or she has discovered.

After paving the way with "pilgrimage" as a framework for understanding, I recommend Fulwiler (1986) as required reading. I have cited his work extensively for a reason: His chapter is as good as anything that is available for an introduction to teaching composition. Fulwiler provides a general review of the writing process for a general audience of educators, hence the review is very accessible. He distills the research and provides specific tips and strategies for making assignments and for providing feedback and assistance.

As a follow-up to Fulwiler's chapter, we might utilize a book-length work, The Craft of Research, by Wayne Booth, Gregory Colomb, and Joseph Williams (1995). The authors provide an excellent discussion of the writing process(es) as well as other considerations for achieving excellence in writing. The book can assist our training and development of our graduate students and can serve as an invaluable, ongoing reference book for them.

In addition to this discussion and these resources, we would do well to provide incoming instructors with some experience/practice with what they will teach. Douglas Pedersen, Karen

Johnson, & Dennis Gouran (1992) provide an excellent discussion of why and how we might have them to try their hand/mind at whatever they assign. Like these authors, I have had good results doing so during an orientation for new instructors. I assign homework as we adjourn from our first day of meetings (and I usually let them out a bit early so that they have time to complete the assignment). I instruct them to show up at our second day of orientation with a sketch of a sample speech of self-introduction. I give them a form that visually lays out the components of the speech (see Appendix A), and I specify the following two goals for the assignment: 1) "To re-acquaint you with the speechmaking process--something you'll be asking others to do in the very near future!" and 2) "To facilitate our discussion of the various options for this speech--something you'll be deciding for your classes and explaining to your students." This exercise achieves the intended goals, plus it has the added benefit of building relations and collegiality among the newcomers.

In addition to drafting a quick speech, we might have them construct other, sample artifacts. As we begin to wrap up the orientation I have them to draft a comprehensive syllabus which includes assignment descriptions. I inventory the basic elements to include and provide sample syllabi for their review. In the days that follow I help them to fine tune the syllabus before they finalize it for their class, and, if time allows, I have them to critique one another's work. I also provide them with experience in exam construction. During the semester, as the first exam looms on the horizon, I meet with them to discuss testing and the qualities of an effective exam. I have them each submit one item for the exam (and each subsequent exam) which I will critique and possibly include on the exam. As a result, after a few guided attempts most TAs are writing items that, with little or no revision, can be included on our exam.

Not only can incoming instructors learn from producing artifacts, they also need experience/practice with critique--something that course directors commonly include in training sessions. To preface this activity, Fulwiler's chapter would comprise good reading as would Gary Ruud's (1992) chapter: "Preparing TAs for classroom critiques of student performances." To facilitate practice critiques we commonly rely on sample, videotaped presentations. In order to

place the emphasis on composition, though, we would need to provide the accompanying outlines as well. Having the speech laid out in outline form will help them to discern what, specifically, needs to be fixed. Then, using Fulwiler (1986) and Ruud (1992) as a backdrop, they can practice writing specific comments, such as, "Lee, the thesis reflects the first and third point you make. It also needs to also reflect point two. How might you modify the thesis?" As they review the sample outline, they would also sharpen their ability to prioritize what the writer needs to address/fix and they would practice providing these recommendations in some general comments to the speaker, using a nurturing mentoring tone. For example, a critic might write something like what follows:

> "Rochelle, I am impressed with the way you have structured this speech and the way you have developed your thesis and main points. Your research is very impressive and the examples you have used connect very well with your audience and allow us to see how real the problem is.
>
> The solution you propose, likewise, could have been made more real if you were to envision how we might go about implementing it and if you provided some specific, real actions that we could take. As presented, it remains a vague recommendation and (as we studied) productive actions are less likely to be pursued; to bolster compliance, the speaker must provide detailed steps and an avenue for immediate action.
>
> [And, gleaned from the videotaped recording:]
>
> Overall good delivery, Rochelle. Two things to focus on to improve delivery in your next speech: 1) project a bit more so we don't have to strain to hear you, and 2) lay the pen aside so you won't be clicking it, okay?"

As an activity, we might have instructors to critique one another's critiques on the basis of the principles we have discussed from Fulwiler (1986) and from Ruud (1992).

As a result of these extensive preparations with writing and critique, TAs likely will feel more confident about assuming their role and will be able to do so more competently. In addition

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to a reduction of anxiety and an improvement in teaching, there will be other, obvious benefits that will carry over into their coursework, their professional careers, and their quality of life.

Writing and Thriving

An emphasis upon composition can be invaluable for our graduate students. One obvious benefit is that the review and practice that we provide regarding composition can enhance their own performance as students. They can apply their understanding of writing and their ability to critique writing to their own projects as they undertake coursework and as they eventually pursue a thesis and or dissertation. Might it be safe to wager that their writing will improve?

These abilities that we seek to develop not only will help graduate students to excel while in the program and while a TA, but they will serve them well in other contexts as well. As Laurel Wilkening (1991) maintains: "Being a TA is not only good training for the professoriate . . . [but] for any type of position that requires leadership, communication skills, and the ability to educate. Frankly, there are not many jobs where those traits are not valued. The teaching assistantship is a very important kind of apprenticeship for producing the next leaders for this country" (p. 16). Wilkening's remarks seem well-warranted; Janis Andersen (1997) notes that the "skills most valued in today's workplace are problem solving, information retrieval, critical thinking, team work, and oral and written communication skills" (p. 125). With an emphasis on composition, we develop and bolster these very skills. With this emphasis we can produce some of the finest talent entering the work force; we can assist the development of tomorrow's leaders.

Certainly we will want nothing less for our own profession. We will want to assist their development as thinkers and producers, capable of writing works that will forward their own mastery as well as contribute to our collective understanding, our scholarship. "Write or wither" as someone once phrased it, noting how writing is our lifeblood, the vehicle that allows us to explore and discover. To help nurture this appreciation and ability is among the noblest acts we might do. Donald Murray (1986) captured this idea perfectly when he wrote, "A life of writing is a life of learning" (p. 152).

The Implications for Our Academic Ethos

Conceptualizing the basic course as advanced composition can enhance our academic ethos. The intellectual rigor of our course coupled with the quality instruction that we provide can make us stand out as an integral and valuable part of the curriculum. Operating with and animated by this conception, we can bolster how we are perceived by students, onlookers, and colleagues alike.

Conceptualizing the basic course with an emphasis upon composition will help us to equip those we would send into the classroom, and the improved instruction that can result may very well bolster the reception we gain from students. If an instructor does not write well, she or he will not model good writing for the students. Not only will learning suffer, but the instructor's credibility may suffer as well--along with the credibility of the department! Our ability to write is central to our performance as instructors and central to our reputation. By helping our graduate teaching assistants to develop proficiency as writers and as instructors of writing we make a major stride toward answering Ernest Boyer's (1991) call that we "make TAs responsibly part of the profession" (p. 4).

Boyer (1991) also held that "the most essential goal of the undergraduate experience is to help all students think critically and become proficient in the written and spoken word" (p. 3). An emphasis upon composition places us squarely in pursuit of this educational goal and, as a result, can improve our reception across disciplines and by administrators. An explicit emphasis on writing can yield improved regard for what we do. Administrators and colleagues in other departments likely will not behold us as merely a skills course but will appreciate the rigor with which we teach and the outcomes we seek for our students.

Conceptualizing public speaking as advanced composition is a vision we would do well to embrace and to nurture (see Williams, 1996). The implications are worth heeding. As Katula and Martin (1984) note, our survival on campus depends on the rigor of what we offer. If we are simply about skills (i.e. delivery), then the "ax" can easily fall. Michael Osborn (1997) observes similarly that "we should avoid confining ourselves to a superficial skills orientation" because "that kind of orientation . . . can trivialize all we do, especially in the unfriendly eyes of some colleagues

in other departments, and can make us vulnerable when the pressure to cut programs arises" (p. 8). Recalling the rhetorical tradition, Lucas (1990) provides the perfect summation: "Introductory public speaking . . . should not be characterized as 'just' a skills course. By helping students become capable, responsible speakers, it also helps them become capable, responsible thinkers. In this respect it remains today, as it has been through much of Western civilization, a vital part of humanistic education and democratic citizenship" (p. 69). With this emphasis upon writing and critical thinking, we can be a force to be reckoned with. We can become true "revolutionaries," as Hart (1993) would say. By emphasizing composition and its demands for critical thought and reflection, we can help release students from "the tyrannies of conventional wisdom, conventional morality, [and] conventional television" (p. 100).

This vision of the basic course is one we would do well to promote within our own departments. Operating with an emphasis upon composition can strengthen our belief in our basic course. We will gain a better understanding of how our course is a valuable part of the curriculum and this understanding can help us to convey its value to our students and our colleagues. With our emphasis on writing and our appreciation of writing as critical thinking we will see more clearly, as Lucas (1990) does, that "we need not apologize for the intellectual content of public speaking courses any more than teachers of English composition apologize for the intellectual content of their courses" (p. 69). With this vision operationalized, perhaps we might also counter some of the apathy surrounding the basic course that Susan Ambrose (1991) identifies.

We must not only stimulate this emphasis and perception but attempt to perpetuate it. Our syllabi must articulate these goals and our assignments embody them. And we must help outfit our next wave of professors. How we prepare them determines how they will arrive to their first appointments. Will they have the appreciation and understanding of writing required for excellence in the classroom and for their own endeavors with writing? To what extent will we enhance their likelihood of success and the accompanying respect and appreciation by students, colleagues, and administrators alike? An emphasis on composition can keep us active, growing, inspired, and animated while those without the emphasis atrophy.

Conclusion

Where does what I have presented leave us? In the midst of a pilgrimage: I am very much still in the process of writing, and the length of this essay testifies to that. I have not been as fair with my reader as I might have been, had I nailed down what I am looking for. Then again, maybe part of our conversation should be glimpses of one's journey along the way, so that we can inspire others to join us in the quest, should they find it worthy. We might make the trek together.

What I have found so far appears worthy, given the implications of what might befall us should we not operate with an emphasis upon composition and what, in contrast, might be the benefits of the emphasis. For instructional purposes as well as to ensure that we will be taken seriously, we must develop an appreciation of what we do in our basic course as a course that essentially is advanced composition. The implications are very real for those who take our courses, our next generation of scholar teachers, and our standing as a discipline. Programs that concentrate on delivery and offer little instruction for the composition of a speech provide less than desirable exposure to the art of speechmaking, do little to test and sharpen analytical skills, and leave themselves vulnerable in the age of institutional downsizing.

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Appendix A: Assignment for Day Two of Orientation: A "Speech" of Self-Introduction

Directions: Sketch out a speech of self-introduction, following the overview of speechmaking provided in chapter two of our textbook. You will need, of course, a theme which unites/suggests various areas of the speech, a grabbing introduction, transitions, & a conclusion.

Goals of this assignment:

1) To re-acquaint you with the speechmaking process--something you'll be asking others to do in the very near future!

2) To facilitate our discussion of the various options for this speech--something you'll be deciding for your classes and explaining to your students.

Planning:

Theme:

Area One: _____

main point:

development:

Area Two: _____

main point:

development:

Area Three: _____

main point:

development:

Ideas for introduction:

Ideas for conclusion:

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